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Words in the news
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Controversy over Czech EU art

A work of art being installed at the European Council building in Brussels has angered EU members because of the way it pokes fun of national stereotypes. It was meant to be the work of 27 European artists - but in reality it was all made by one man. Rob Cameron reports:

David Cerny is the **enfant terrible** of the Czech art world, and so when the government commissioned him to create an installation, **several eyebrows were raised**.

They were not raised in vain. The artwork, called **Entropa**, shows the EU's 27 members as **snap-out** plastic parts of the sort used in modelling kits. Each represents a country according to **the crudest national stereotypes**.

Bulgaria is shown as **a Turkish toilet**, Romania as Dracula's castle, and the Netherlands is underwater, with just a couple of **minarets poking through the waves**. But even more controversially, Denmark is made up of **Lego** building blocks which, from a distance, form an image of the Prophet Mohammed. And Germany is a network of moving autobahns - lit up, they resemble a crooked swastika.

Czech officials originally praised the rough sketches for the piece, saying making fun of **prejudice** was the most effective way of destroying it. But it's not clear if they were aware just how provocative the finished result would be.

Rob Cameron, BBC News, Prague

Vocabulary and definitions

enfant terrible	here, an artist who has become well-known because of his or her very innovative, avant-garde, even shocking artwork (the expression comes from French)
several eyebrows were raised	some people were surprised
They were not raised in vain	their surprise turned out to be justified/well founded
Entropa	a non-existent word formed as the combination of 'entropy' - a measure of the disorder in a system - and 'Europa', the word for 'Europe' in many European languages
snap-out	that you can detach/take out
the crudest national stereotypes	here, the fixed ideas people have about different European nations that can be completely inaccurate
a Turkish toilet	a squat-down toilet with no seat (informally, often referred to as a 'hole in the floor' or 'hole in the ground')
minarets poking through the waves	tall thin towers on or near mosques showing above the sea waters
Lego	a toy for children consisting of small plastic pieces which can be joined together to make models of different objects
prejudice	irrational dislike, often based on inaccurate stereotypes

More on this story: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7827738.stm

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2009/01/090114_entropa.shtml